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United for Quality Care

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Faysal Prodhan, PCA  
Norwich  
District 1199 New England  
Before the Labor Committee

***In Support of SB 1178: AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT PAID SICK DAYS***

Good Evening Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez and members of the Committee, my name is Faysal Prodhan and I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) living in Norwich. I come before you today to ask that you pass Senate Bill 1178 so that PCAs can use paid sick days to not lose a day of pay and care for ourselves when we are sick.

While I have only been officially working as a PCA for a little over a year, I have provided this type of care for my father for over ten years. Caring for my father is something I am honored to do. I love helping him to be more active and to live a more fulfilled life. While it is nice to be paid to care for him, I would do it either way because it is my responsibility. My sister is a PCA as well, it is in my family's culture to care for one another.

However, just because we love our father and love caring for him does not mean that it does not come with its challenges. I had to quit my job in order to care for my father and so now my primary source of income is through my work as a PCA. Working as a PCA has opened my eyes to the struggles of living in poverty and living one event away from a crisis.

Let me give you an example of how unstable life can be as a PCA. My father got sick with Covid in 2021 and I could not work. The following Monday I got sick too. I went to the Connecticut Department of Labor to file for unemployment but they made it difficult. They gave me \$107.00 for the week. I was making \$500.00 a week as a PCA. If I had been able to use paid sick days at the time, I would not have had to worry about losing \$400 a week and been able to properly care for myself. As a PCA, your employment is tied to your consumer and without livable wages, paid time off, and other benefits you become very vulnerable. You begin to feel as though one accident or negative life event is all it will take to send me spiraling into a financial crisis. This is unacceptable for any worker let alone a professional caregiver such as a PCA.

When we won our new Union contract last spring we won the first-ever paid time off benefit, 5 days per year for full-time workers. BUT almost a year later, the State of CT hasn't implemented a system to use this benefit yet.

We need to do better as a state and that is why I have come before you today. Please pass this bill so that PCAs can take the time needed when we are sick to care for ourselves without having to worry about how we are going to pay for our bills.

Thank you for your time.